



AGRI-FOOD SMEs

COLLABORATING FOR INNOVATION ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN



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Participatory workshop, 17 October 2017

- Organised by DG RTD and DG AGRI in cooperation with the SCAR SWGs AKIS and Food Systems
- Linked to the European Commission conference Harnessing Research and Innovation for FOOD 2030: a Science Policy Dialogue
- 60 participants:
 - **Mainly Agri-food SMEs, also innovation managers, intermediaries, experts, retailers, consumer representatives and policy makers**
- 23 Agri-food SME presentations of collaboration on innovation



Objectives of the workshop

Discussions, formulate recommendations and list best practices on:

- **Agri-food SMEs' main challenges, opportunities and collaborative innovation approaches**
- **knowledge flows/exchange among Agri-food SMEs and along the supply chain**
- **cross-fertilisation between Agri-food SMEs and all links in the chain**
- **consumer expectations (quality, local, organic, traditional food) and environmental aspects**
- **market opportunities and challenges (economic aspects)**



Setting the scene

What is innovation?



Research Institute of Agricultural Economics

www.aki.gov.hu

- **Barend Verachtert (DG RTD) and Rob Peters (DG AGRI)**
 - stressed the importance of the food systems approach - joint forces by both DGs
- **Aniko Juhasz, AKI - HU:**
 - many SMEs in the EU do not innovate sufficiently or rely solely on in-house expertise; stimulating collaboration on innovation is essential
- **Cristina Mota Capitaó, Inovisa - PT:**
 - CropUP initiative develops an ecosystem of start-ups and other actors to contribute to the technology revolution and to collaborate on knowledge and innovation
- **Inge Arents, Flanders' FOOD - BE:**
 - Flanders' Food enhances innovation capacity by leading to knowledge, leading in knowledge, accelerate efficient and effective innovation and creating/crossing value chains

Collaboration on innovation: 23 presentations

| Co-innovating distribution, value sharing, sales models | Co-innovating distribution, value sharing, sales models | Co-innovating product and process | Co-innovating technologies |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Agri Marketplace | Innovatiesteunpunt | AgroMais | Black Block |
| SmartFarmer | Ranchising | We Deliver Taste | Buggypower |
| La Ruche | Soil Association | Arla Foods | Novolyze |
| Cambridge Food Hub | Oatly | Stevia Hellas | Gold and Green Foods |
| Clube de Produtores Continente | AKI - case | Házikó | FWEE |
| COVAP | TPOrganics | | Jimini's |

Discussing **co-creating** innovation: **what and who?**

- Form **multi-actor innovation clusters** to stimulate innovative activity by interactions, by sharing facilities, exchanging knowledge and expertise to contribute effectively to technology transfer, networking and dissemination
- Better **connect agri-food SMEs** to the other links in the food chain which are **closer to the final consumers**, and support them in more direct connections with the end-consumers of their products
- Create **better understanding of the interconnection** between food production and consumption in the value chain
- Co-creating innovation in agri-food is not only about better connections in the chain; it is also about **involving local and regional communities**
- Next to research, focus on **instruments and public-private actions** that enhance the innovation ecosystem such as EIP-AGRI, EIT Food, public procurement, etc.

Discussing **co-creating** innovation: **how?**

- Supporting the search for the right **knowledge, developing skills, expertise and competence** is equally important as providing funding: creating an 'innovation supporting environment'
- **More support infrastructures and networks/hubs** such as Inovisa and Flanders' FOOD should be developed at regional, national and EU level
- **Networking, (physical) events and workshops** are important to demonstrate the latest technology and to exchange best practices at regional/national and EU level
- Focus on knowledge exchange and demonstration across borders to enhance **possibilities of replicating** examples and mechanisms from one region to another (EIP-AGRI)

Tips for successful collaboration

**Trust, transparency
and expectations**

**Team facilitation: the
spider in the web**

**Win-win for both
economic and societal
impact**

Potential solutions for future collaboration

Improve possibilities for exchange of data & information in the agri-food chain

The right funding in the right phases of the innovation process

Enforce multi-actor approach for an optimal combination of equipment and skills



Types of support to stimulate collaboration

Towards a mature
innovation
ecosystem

Policy and regulation to
foster cooperation, a
level playing field and
create synergy

Financial support to
prepare innovation
projects



Thank you!

www.ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy

www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/research-innovation_en



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